

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-10 and 13-26 are currently pending, per below. Claim 11 has been canceled, without prejudice.

1. (Once Amended) An apparatus for use in a lifting and towing vehicle, comprising:

a transverse cross bar connected to the end of a boom located rearwardly of the lifting and towing vehicle, the cross bar being positionable below a towable vehicle, and the cross bar having two opposing end portions positionable adjacent to one of a pair of wheels on the towable vehicle;

two slidable receivers each removably connected to the opposing end portions of the cross bar, each receiver having an engagement mechanism facilitating rapid connection and decoupling of the receivers from the cross bar, the receivers also each carrying a wheel support member having an elongated arm and a wheel retainer, and the wheel support members being capable of being swung back and forth in a generally horizontal plane;

one or more powering mechanisms connected to the wheel support member for driving movement of the wheel support members in the generally horizontal plane;

whereby the receivers with the wheel support members together comprise a wheel lift apparatus ~~which may be rapidly~~ removably connected to the cross bar using the engaging mechanism, facilitating rapid connection or disassembly of the wheel lift apparatus from the

cross bar in a matter of minutes ~~from the cross bar~~ in the field to rapidly permit conversion from the wheel lift apparatus to an alternate towing apparatus.

2. (As originally presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the apparatus comprises a self-loading wheel lift.

3. (As originally presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the alternate towing apparatus comprises a tow bar.

4. (As originally presented) The apparatus of Claim 3, wherein the tow bar includes frame fork attachments.

5. (As originally presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the elongated arms may be swung in the horizontal plane from a position inside tires of the towable vehicle to a wheel engaging position.

6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the engaging further comprising one or more mechanisms comprises a cam lock facilitating rapid connection and decoupling of each receiver from the cross bar.

7. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 6, wherein the ~~mechanism~~ comprises a cam lock ~~comprises including~~ a rotatable handle and a spring-loaded plunger pin.

8. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the one or more powering mechanisms comprises one or more hydraulic cylinders.

9. (As originally presented) The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the one or more

hydraulic cylinders communicate with cylinder rods that are removably attached to the receivers.

10. (As originally presented) The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein a distal end of each cylinder rod includes an aperture for use in coupling each cylinder rod to a receiver.

11. (CANCELED) ~~The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein each cylinder rod comprises two component rods that are connected to each other and that may rapidly disconnect.~~

12. (CANCELED) ~~The apparatus of Claim 11, wherein each of the one or more cylinder rods may be quickly connected and disconnected from pivot means attached to the receivers using a removable locking pin.~~

13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein each wheel support members is pivotally attached to a receiver using a pivot pin.

14. (Once Amended) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the pivot pin is prevented from being disengaged by a retaining screw.

15. (As originally presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the attachment of each wheel support member to each receiver comprises two generally parallel plates, one plate lying above the cross bar and one plate lying below the cross bar.

16. (As originally presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein each wheel support member comprises an L-arm.

17. (As originally presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the boom comprises an extensible and retractable boom, and further comprising a hydraulically powered actuator to

move the boom into different angular orientations relative to horizontal.

18. (As originally presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the end portions of the cross bar are horizontally moveable relative to the rest of the cross bar.

19. (Twice Amended) A method for using a lifting and towing vehicle, comprising the steps of:

positioning a boom adjacent a towable vehicle, the boom carrying a transverse support beam;

positioning the transverse support beam below a towable vehicle, the support beam having two opposing end portions each supporting ~~removably~~ removable and slidable connected receivers, each receiver having an engagement mechanism facilitating rapid connection and decoupling from the cross bar and carrying a wheel support member, the wheel support members being pivotally connected to the receivers and capable of being swung back and forth in a generally horizontal plane, the receivers and wheel support members comprising a wheel lift apparatus;

positioning a wheel engaging portion of each wheel support member adjacent and between each of a pair of wheels of the towable vehicle, and then causing the wheel engaging portion to rotate outwardly toward the wheels of the towable vehicle into a wheel engaging position, wherein one or more powering mechanisms drive ~~driving~~ movement of the wheel support members in the generally horizontal plane;

lifting and towing the now wheel-engaged and towable vehicle to a desired location; and disengaging the towable vehicle, and converting the lifting and towing vehicle in the field by rapidly and quickly disassembling the wheel lift apparatus from the support bar in a matter of minutes and replacing the wheel lift apparatus with an alternate towing apparatus.

20. (As originally presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the one or more powering mechanisms comprise hydraulic cylinders.

21. (Once Amended) The method of Claim 19, wherein the alternate towing apparatus comprises a frame fork attachment holders.

22. (Once Amended) The method of Claim 19, wherein the step of conversion is accomplished by rapidly removing the receivers and from the support bar.

23. (As originally presented) The method of Claim 20 19, wherein the ~~one or more~~ hydraulic cylinders communicate with one or more cylinder rods that are removably attached to the receivers, the cylinder rods being disconnected from the receivers during the conversion step.

24. (As originally presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the wheel lift apparatus comprises a self-loading wheel lift.

25. (Newly Added) The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein the powering mechanisms are connected through a plate to the wheel support members, and wherein the plate is capable of being quickly decoupled from the powering mechanisms.

26. (Newly Added) The apparatus of Claim 25, where the wheel support members

are each connected to a powering mechanism using a plate.